

million less than the request. The Architect's Office is \$5 million more, but \$114 million below the request. The Library of Congress is \$15 million more than last year, but \$18 million below the request. The GPO is \$9 million more, but \$21 million below the request. The Government Accountability Office is \$10 million more than last year, but \$14 million below the request.

There are a number of other changes made within the bill that I think are also positive. One of the changes will be for the Members' allowances. If they are unspent, they will be used to reduce the budget deficit. For someone who has regularly returned back at least 10 to 20 percent of my budget allocation, it is nice to know that it is also going to a worthy cause.

In addition, this bill provides provisions for increased congressional oversight and accountability on the completion of the much-anticipated Capitol Visitor Center, as well as some very specific report language and an amendment that dealt also with the Architect's Office and the Government Accountability Office until the new Architect is provided.

The underlying bill provides for full funding of staff COLAs and transit benefits, it bans smoking in the Rayburn cafeteria, and I understand on page 35 it says that the gentleman from Massachusetts will voluntarily give me his salary for the next year, or until my personal debt has been retired, whichever comes first, which will be the year.

It also provides for 50 new investigators in the General Accounting Office to conduct increased oversight on government contracts issued in the wake of hurricane devastation in the gulf coast as well as in Iraq.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, I think this underlying bill is fiscally responsible, provides modest increases in the essential legislative branch functions, but still provides less in almost every major category than the President's budget requested. So I urge adoption of this rule and its underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Utah, my friend, Mr. BISHOP, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I cannot recall the last time I came to the House floor to say anything good about a rule, but the fact of the matter is this is a good rule. Every Member who brought an amendment before the Rules Committee, their amendment has been made in order. So this is a good rule.

We have no speakers, we are not requiring any votes, and I want to thank the gentleman from Utah for bringing this to the floor.

I rise today in support of the FY 2007 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. I commend

Chairman LEWIS and Ranking Member OBEY, as well as the rest of the Appropriations Committee, for all their hard work on this legislation.

Historically, the Legislative Branch Appropriations bill is not considered under an open process like the other appropriations bills. Instead, the House usually considers this bill under a closed process. However, even though the Rules Committee reported a restrictive rule again, this year every amendment offered in the Rules Committee was made in order.

Mr. Speaker, it's refreshing that this bill is a bipartisan product of the legislative process, a true rarity under this Republican leadership. The Republican leadership should look to this bill as a lesson in how this body should be run. Sunshine should be let it. Amendments should be made in order. Mr. Speaker, as much as possible, the process should be open.

The fact that Mr. OBEY and others had questions regarding the operations at the Office of the Architect of the Capitol was valid and was heard. With unanimous support in Committee, Ranking Member OBEY's amendment putting the Comptroller General in direct control over the office of the Architect of the Capitol and the establishment of an Office of the Inspector General in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol was offered and adopted. The rule protects that amendment from being struck from the bill.

Mr. Speaker, with an ever growing deficit of \$9 billion, I think even my good friend and colleague, Congressman FLAKE, would agree with me in the right to question where funds have been spent on the new Capitol Visitors Center. Now, I realize the cost is often never close to the estimate; however, this project was originally budgeted at \$265 million and the new projected cost estimate is \$556 million. That is \$25 million more than double the cost and we are not finished. Completion dates and costs seem to just be getting later and higher.

The rest of the budget for the Legislative Branch seems to get it right. Small overall increases help keep Congress functioning. With a \$110 million increase from FY06, this bill provides for 50 new Government Accountability Office, GAO, investigators to provide for increased oversight in gulf coast reconstruction and the war in Iraq. Providing for a strong and properly funded GAO is important, especially when considering that oversight is nonexistent in this Republican-controlled House.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman LEWIS and Ranking Member OBEY for their hard drafting this legislation and for their commitment to this body.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Massachusetts, I will appreciate his check, and I look forward to passing this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5521, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

#### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 849 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 5521.

The Chair designates the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and requests the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) to assume the chair temporarily.

□ 1256

#### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 5521) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes, with Mr. BOOZMAN (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill that we bring before you today is the legislative branch bill that funds the activities of the House. The bill includes approximately \$3 billion, excluding the Senate items, an increase of about 3.6 percent over FY 2006.

We worked very closely with Mr. OBEY and his staff in developing this bill. I want to thank the committee members on both sides of the aisle, as well as our very fine staff for the work they have done.

While the bill is very small in size, it is the fundamental oil that allows the legislative branch to carry out its important responsibilities relative to our Nation's legislative and governmental interests here in Washington.

The bill represents a \$224 million reduction, or 6.9 percent below the request. There will be no further reduction in the current workforce. All personnel cost-of-living increases and all